GUIDELINES FOR
OPERATING A DAY CARE FACILITY FOR CHILDREN
IN NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia
Department of
Social Services

1983

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Who requires a license to operate a Day Care facility in Nova Scotia?

Any person or several individuals wishing to operate a Day Care facility for four or more children, apart from their parents or guardian, may make application in the prescribed form and manner for a license to operate a Day Care facility.

An application form, as well as other material pertinent to the establishment of a Day Care facility for children are available by request from the Day Care office - Department of Social Services, at the address stated below.

A Day Care facility licensed by the Nova Scotia Department of Social Services must provide:

- a physical environment which is safe for young children and meets the requirements of health and fire authorities;
- a daily program which:
  - stimulates the children's intellectual, physical, emotional and social development,
  - includes activities to encourage language development, and
  - provides a balance of indoor and outdoor play;
- nutritionally-balanced meals and snacks, and
- an appropriate number of staff members.

The guidelines in this booklet were prepared to assist operators and staff of Day Care facilities in the Province of Nova Scotia to meet these licensing requirements.

If you have a question or require more information, please contact:

Director of Day Care Services
Department of Social Services
Province of Nova Scotia
P.O. Box 696
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2T7
Telephone: (902) 424-3204

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ROLE OF THE NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Administration and enforcement of the Day Care Act and Regulations in the Province of Nova Scotia are the responsibility of the Administrator of Family and Children's Services in the Nova Scotia Department of Social Services. Reporting to the Administrator, the Director of Day Care Services assists individuals and groups interested in establishing day care facilities and supervises the operation of licensed facilities. The Director makes recommendations to the Minister of Social Services on the licensing and re-licensing of day care facilities.

You may wish to consult the Day Care Services Section on such matters as:

- the interpretation of the Day Care Act and Regulations,
- improvements in your facility's program or operations, including such areas as equipment, play materials, record-keeping, nutrition and staff training, and
- the special needs of physically or mentally handicapped children, including diagnostic resources, treatment possibilities and referrals to day care facilities that provide care for special needs children.

The Department of Social Services administers a subsidy program for eligible families who require financial assistance with their day care fees. These subsidy payments are made directly to those registered day care facilities that have been allocated subsidized spaces. Registered day care facilities are non-profit facilities incorporated under the Societies Act of Nova Scotia and managed by a community board of directors.

DAY CARE ACT AND REGULATIONS

You shall maintain an up-to-date copy of the Day Care Act (Chapter 6, Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1978) and Regulations in your facility. Copies are available from the Nova Scotia Government Bookstore, 1597 Hollis Street, P.O. Box 637, Halifax, N.S., B3J 2T3.

RENEWING YOUR LICENSE

Your license to operate a day care facility shall be conspicuously displayed in your facility. Day care facilities in Nova Scotia must be re-licensed by the Minister of Social Services on a regular basis. The expiry date of your facility's license is shown on your license.

Two months before your license expires, the Director of Day Care Services will request a copy of your annual report. Once this report is received, Day Care Services staff will visit your facility and Department of Health staff will prepare a report on your health standards.

The Director of Day Care Services may recommend to the Minister of Social Services that your license:

1. be renewed, or
2. be renewed, subject to conditions stated on the license, or
3. not be renewed, if your facility does not meet the requirements of the Day Care Act and Regulations.

The Minister of Social Services may cancel, suspend or refuse to issue or renew your facility's license if the Day Care Act or Regulations are violated or if the conditions stated on your license are not met. The Minister will provide written reasons for the cancellation, suspension or refusal, and you may request the Minister to review the action.

CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT

Licenses to operate day care facilities cannot be transferred. If the person to whom a license has been issued no longer operates or owns the facility, the license is cancelled and the new operator must apply for a new license in his or her name.

RIGHT OF ENTRY

The Director of Day Care Services (or a representative of the Director) is permitted to enter your facility at all reasonable times to examine the premises, equipment, facilities, books or records.

REGISTER

Each facility shall maintain a register containing the following information for each child:

1. name and birth date of the child;
2. names, home addresses, work and home telephone numbers of the child's parents or guardians;
3. name and address of the child's physician;
4. name and telephone number of the person to be notified in an emergency;
5. dates on which the child was admitted and discharged, and
6. daily attendance, including arrival and departure times.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

You shall maintain an individual record for each child which includes:

1. the completed application for admission;
2. initial and annual medical reports;
3. a minimum of two progress reports for each year of attendance, and
4. consent forms signed by the parents or guardians for emergency medical treatments and outings.

These individual records should be kept for two years after the child's discharge.

STAFF

The chief administrative officer of your facility, or a designated representative, shall be in the facility at all times when children are present.

In facilities providing a full-day program, the ratio of staff working directly with children shall be no lower than:

- one staff member to every seven children under five years of age, and
- one staff member to every 15 children five years of age and older.

In facilities providing a part-day program only, the ratio of staff working directly with children shall be no lower than one staff member to every 12 children under five years of age. A facility is considered to be providing a part-day program if it is not open at noontime.

Each staff member shall obtain a physician's certificate confirming that he or she is free from communicable diseases:

. prior to being employed, and
. on an annual basis thereafter.

DAILY SCHEDULE AND PROGRAM

Your facility's daily schedule shall be posted in a conspicuous place where parents may view it.

Regular staff meetings shall be held to plan themes and general program content and to discuss the children's progress.

A daily plan book shall be maintained, indicating specific activities planned for craft, circle and story time. Field trips or any other activities away from the facility shall be recorded in the daily plan book, including the children's destination and the expected time of their return to the facility.

BEHAVIOUR AND GUIDANCE

A well-planned program which meets the needs of each child will generally eliminate inappropriate behaviour in your day facility.

You shall have a written policy for your staff and volunteers with respect to permitted and prohibited behaviour management practices.

The following forms of discipline shall not be used:

1. corporal punishment, including but not limited to the following:
   . striking a child directly or with any physical object,
   . shaking, shoving, spanking, or other forms of aggressive physical contact, and
   . requiring or forcing a child to repeat physical movements, and

2. harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional or physical.

In developing your behaviour management policy, you should consider the following techniques for positively guiding children in learning appropriate behavior:

1. Staff will adopt a positive attitude towards the children which includes enjoyment of and respect for the children as individuals.

2. Limits set should be enforced consistently and fairly.

3. Under certain circumstances, staff may want to use physical contact to guide behaviour, for example, holding a child to prevent disruptive behaviour. An adult touch during a frustrating situation may have a calming effect on the child, thereby avoiding or extinguishing destructive behaviour.

4. Discipline statements should be expressed positively wherever possible. Tell a child what he can do, rather than what he cannot do.

5. Staff shall sustain activity with the child and listen to him or her during periods of upset behaviour.

6. A brief period of isolation or 'time-out' may sometimes be required. A child shall never be placed alone in a room, but may be removed from an activity for a period of quiet time.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Indoors

Rooms for the use of children under two years of age shall be on the ground floor. Rooms for the use of children between two and six years of age shall be on either the ground or second floors.

No more than 25 children shall be in a room or play area at any one time for rest or play.

Each child shall be allocated a cubicle or hook (at the child's eye level) for storing his or her belongings.

Washing and toilet facilities suitable for young children shall be adjacent to activity or play areas. At least one hand basin and one toilet shall be provided for every 10 children.

Thirty square feet (2.75 square metres) of unobstructed play space (excluding kitchen, washrooms, hallways and storage areas) shall be provided for each child.

Outdoors

A supervised, safe, sanitary outdoor play area containing at least 60 square feet (5.5 square metres) of play space per child shall be available within a reasonable distance of the facility. In order to protect the children from hazards, the play area shall be surrounded by a fence at least four feet (1.5 metres) high.

Within the first year of operation, you must acquire a sand box and equipment i.e. climbing frame and swing to encourage large muscle development.

SPACE AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Infants (between the ages of three months and two years)

1. a separate sleeping area, which must be on the ground floor;
2. a designated crib for each child under 18 months and a designated cot for each child 18 months to two years old, with appropriate bedding;
3. an appropriate number of high chairs for the feeding of children under 18 months;
4. (at least 30 square feet (2.75 square metres) of) play space for each child which:
   - . is separated from the older children in the facility,
   - . includes space for physical activity and a warm, safe crawling space, and
   - . is equipped with fine and gross motor toys;
5. a diapering table with a smooth, non-absorbent pad which can be cleaned after each diaper change;
6. a hand basin adjacent to the changing table so that staff may wash after each diaper change, and
7. an appropriate number of small tables and chairs for children between 18 months and two years.

Pre-School Age Children (between the ages of two and five years and not attending school)

1. an appropriate number of child-size tables and chairs;
2. play areas which include at least four different learning centres* such as:
   - . housekeeping centre;

* As your facility becomes established, you are expected to provide more than the four minimum learning centres.

. store;
. library with books within the children's reach;
. arts and crafts;
. table top activity centre, including puzzles and games;
. science centre;
. music centre;
. puppet theatre;
. sand and water play centre;
. building blocks, and
. carpentry centre.

3. in the case of a full-day program, a designated cot or mat for each child with clean, moisture-resistant covers and bedding, and
4. individual face cloths, toothbrushes and paper towels or individual towels which are hung in the washroom on designated hooks at the child's eye level.

School-Age Children (children five years and older and attending school but registered at the facility in the morning, at noon, after school or for the afternoon only)

1. a designated space in the facility;
2. an appropriate number of tables and chairs for lunch and table-top activities;
3. play equipment which meets the children's interests, such as puzzles, games, crafts, books, housekeeping, sand, water and painting centre, and
4. individual face cloths, toothbrushes and paper towels or individual towels which are hung on designated hooks in the washrooms.

MAKING PHYSICAL ALTERATIONS

Before you make any physical alterations to your facility, you shall advise the Director of Day Care Services so that the appropriate authorities are consulted regarding the effects of the planned alterations on the safety and needs of your children.

CLEANING

A schedule must be established assigning cleaning duties to staff members.

The following areas must be cleaned every day:

- kitchen,
- washrooms, and
- play areas.

Daily cleaning of infant play areas must include playpens, walkers, highchairs, toys and cribs. Crib sheets must be changed daily, more often if necessary.

The following areas should be cleaned once a week or more often;

- offices,
- halls, and
- cloakrooms.

TRANSPORTATION

If your day care facility provides transportation for your children, you are responsible for their safety while in transit. Each vehicle used to transport children shall meet the requirements of the Motor Vehicle Act of Nova Scotia. In addition, you must chec' with your insurance company to ensure you have adequate coverage to transport the children and to determine the maximum number of children permitted in your vehicle and the number of adults required for supervision. A first aid kit and portable fire extinguisher should be provided in each vehicle and kept replenished.

If your staff members are transporting children as part of their duties in vehicles which are designed to carry 10 - 24 persons, i.e. vans or mini-buses, they must have a class 4 license from the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Drivers transporting children on behalf of your facility should personally deliver each child to:

- a member of your staff,
- the child's parent or guardian, or
- a person appointed in writing by the parent or guardian.

NUTRITION

If children stay at your facility over the noon-meal period, they shall be given a nutritious meal which provides one-third of the recommended daily nutrients for their age group. Children attending full-day programs shall also be given a nutritious snack in the morning and the afternoon.

Menus shall be prepared once a month in advance and posted. Copies of menus served shall be kept for a one year period.

Children in part-day (morning or afternoon) programs shall have an appropriate nutritious snack during the session.

When planning meals and snacks for children, you must consult the Canada Food Guide.

Nutritionists in Department of Health district offices are prepared to provide consultation in food purchasing, menu planning and recipe suggestions for young children. The nutritional needs of infants should be planned in consultation with the nutritionists and the infants' parents or guardians.

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

According to the Day Care Act, each child in your facility must:

. undergo a medical examination before being admitted to your facility, and annually thereafter, and

. have his or her immunization up-to-date before being admitted to your facility.

Community Health Nurses in the district offices of the Nova Scotia Department of Health are available to all day care facilities. You should consult these nurses regarding such matters as the normal growth of children, communicable diseases and general hygienic measures.

No prescription drug or over-the-counter medicines shall be given to any child in your facility, unless you are specifically authorized by a physician to administer this medication.

Specifically, the interpretation of Section 19(9) of the Day Care Act and Regulations is as follows:

- A prescription drug may be administered as ordered by the physician, and as stated on the prescription container for the child.

- A non-prescription drug may only be administered if the physician has written a note authorizing the child to be given this specific medicine.

The Department's requirement for Section 19(9) of the Regulations is that the parent or guardian provide a written note for the facility to administer either a prescription or non-prescription drug in support of the physician's order.

All drugs and medicines shall be kept in a safe locked place out of the reach of children.

You shall keep a daily record of all drugs that have been administered on the written direction of a physician. This record shall include:

- name of the child receiving the drug;
- name of the authorizing physician;
- name of the drug;
- time of the drug's administration;
- amount of the drug administered, and
- signature of the staff member who administered the drug.

A first aid kit shall be readily available in your facility and constantly replenished to include at least:

- gauze;
- bandages;
- thermometer;
- antiseptic ointment;
- scissors, and
- adhesive tape.

All staff members at your facility shall have a basic knowledge of first aid, preferably obtained by attending a St. John's Ambulance first aid course.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

When an accident, serious illness or communicable disease occurs in your facility, you shall immediately obtain the necessary medical assistance and notify the parents or guardians and the Director of Day Care Services.

Health

If a child in your facility shows symptoms of illness or is involved in an accident:

1. The child shall be placed in an isolation area with a staff member in constant attendance, and be made as comfortable as possible.

2. The child's parents or guardians shall be immediately notified and asked to come to the facility to take responsibility for the child. If the parent or guardian is not available, a physician shall be immediately called to examine the child or the child shall be taken to the nearest hospital or emergency health centre for treatment.

3. If an accident occurs, the staff member present at the time of the accident shall record the circumstances on the child's record and document every action taken by the facility. This report shall be signed by the supervisor on duty at the time of the accident.

Fire

Procedures to be followed in the case of fire or other emergency must be developed and posted in your facility. These procedures shall include:

1. The person discovering the fire shall immediately call the fire department and sound the alarm.

2. Staff shall be assigned to safely evacuate the children from the facility and to check washrooms, closets and other possible hiding areas.

3. Staff members shall supervise the children in temporary accommodation until the childrens' parents or guardians arrive.

A fire drill shall be conducted at least once a month and a record maintained of:

- the date and time of the drill, and
- the length of time required to evacuate all the children from the facility.

Fire extinguishers approved by the Provincial Fire Marshal shall be provided in your facility, regularly inspected and replenished, and staff shall be trained in their proper use.

Fire extinguishers shall be checked at least annually by the appropriate authorities.

Fire exits must be kept clear of obstacles at all times.

Telephone Numbers and Children's Records

Addresses and telephone numbers for the following persons shall be posted by the telephone in your facility:

- all staff members, including substitute staff;
- taxi;
- ambulance;

. hospital;
. fire department;
. police, and
. other emergency services.

The children's records, including their medical reports and parents' or guardians' consent forms, shall be kept in the facility at all times and stored in a locked, fire-resistant, filing cabinet.

Power Failure

Serviceable flashlights shall be kept in every play and office area and used as emergency lighting during a power failure.

Electrical Outlets

In play areas used by children under four years of age, all electrical outlets shall be covered.

Insurance

Your facility shall have adequate liability insurance and, where appropriate, fire, theft and automobile insurance.